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## Turkey on the way to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Republic



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It is a great honor and pleasure to be able to share some thoughts with this group of distinguished guests tonight. I am very grateful to the organizers, the AFT and Elizabeth Shelton, and to Ambassador Tan for hosting it. Turkey is about to embark on the decade leading to 2023, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic founded by Atatürk and his companions. Prime Minister Erdoğan has set as a national objective to have Turkey in 2023 become one of the 10 largest economies in the world ( Turkey is ranked 16th today ). It is a good time to briefly look back at the last 90 years, but even more so, to look ahead 10 years and try to see what kind of Turkey is emerging in this first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This lecture is about Turkey, not only about Atatürk. I am an economist, not a historian. But we are discussing the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic and I will start with a story about Atatürk, which is also a story about modern Turkey.

From 2005 to 2009, I was Executive Head of the United Nations Development Program, headquartered in New York. In 2007, I hired a new research analyst for my front office. She was a very bright young Turkish woman, perhaps about 25 years old. She was not from Istanbul, Ankara or Izmir, but from Samsun, on the eastern Black Sea coast in Anatolia. I went to her office to welcome her on her first day of work. She had not yet unpacked anything, the office was full of boxes, her table was empty and the walls were clear of posters or pictures. Clear, except for *one* picture which she had hung on the yet bare walls: a picture of Atatürk, of Mustafa Kemal Paşa.

I asked myself, is there any other leader who passed away decades ago, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the picture of whom would be the first thing a young research analyst would hang on her bare walls, by her own initiative, outside of her own country, the minute she started a new job, in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? I could not come up with any other example that even came close. This is not to say that there have not been very great leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose names emerge forcefully from history books and who have had a determining impact on their countries and the world. But the association between the Turkish Republic and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk has been particularly strong. I should add that Nergis was certainly patriotic, she loved Turkey and her “Turkishness”, but not at all in a narrow excessively nationalistic way. She was

open to the world, an excellent economist, loving New York, as an American and also global city, loving the United Nations where she still works in a more senior position, hoping that Turkey could join the European Union, but also very interested in helping the poorest countries of the world, eager to know Africa, Asia and Latin America. She was also a woman. Millions of Turkish women, in particular, carry deep in their hearts a lasting gratitude for the revolutionary changes Atatürk introduced to make it possible for them to become equal citizens, equal human beings. Putting Atatürk on the wall as the first thing she did was symbolic of how his name and the history of the struggle to establish the Turkish Republic remains part of the identity of so many of Turkey's citizens. While in the 1930s, and later, there have been strong attempts to fabricate an ethnic basis for Turkish identity, the association between Atatürk and identity is far from one based on ethnicity. On the contrary, it is based on two other dominant dimensions. I will try to explain what I mean.

One of the Turkish novels that impressed me the most as a young man was Kemal Tahir's novel entitled "Yorgun Savaşçı", in English, the "Tired Warrior". It is a novel about the catastrophic defeat of the Ottoman Empire, it's tearing apart by the Western powers after World War I, the terrible feeling of loss in the hearts of an officer of the Ottoman army, and despite all this, the will to survive, the will to resist, the will to rise again. It is this will that Mustafa Kemal catalyzed, harnessed, and led to victory. At stake was survival and self determination, including the future of millions of Moslem refugees from the Balkans, the Aegean islands, Crimea and the Caucasus. Many spoke the Turkish of those times, but many others spoke Bosnian, Greek, Kurdish, Albanian, Arabic or Bulgarian, or the languages of Circassians, Georgians or Tatars as their mother tongues. Despite the ethnic ideology that some later tried to impose, Atatürk's Republic was founded on a multi-ethnic basis – indeed there is his famous answer to the question of who is a Turk: A Turk is a citizen of the Turkish Republic. Just like an American is a citizen of the United States, whatever her or his origin. But, to be honest, while definitely multi-ethnic, this "founding identity" was not really multi-religious. The western powers and Russia had encouraged the Christian minorities to side with them against the Ottomans. There had been terrible ethnic cleansing and

massacres on a grand scale by *all sides* throughout the Balkan Wars and World War I. The refugees from Crimea, from the Caucasus, from the Balkans were Moslem refugees, who had fled ethnic cleansing campaigns against Moslems in their homelands. During the sad population exchange agreed between Turkey and Greece after the independence war, Greek speaking Moslems from Greece had to come to Turkey, and Turkish speaking Orthodox Christians, had to resettle in Greece. The Republic became a secular Republic, and all citizens had indeed the same legal rights, but there were to be officially recognized non-Moslem minorities, but no Moslem minorities, since the very construction of the Republic was based on the assembly of various largely Moslem groups into Turkey and “Turkishness”. So at the very root of Turkish republican identity there was the memory of the heroic resistance against huge odds by the “tired warriors”, the construction of a new homeland for Moslem populations from all over the larger region and their merging into a new “Turkishness”. The misguided attempts to translate this identity into some ethnic-racial concept later on in the 1930s, became a source of confusion and problems. But I think one should not forget that Atatürk’s Republic was a direct successor of a multi-ethnic Ottoman empire, and provided safe haven to millions of people fleeing persecution from various ethnic origins, refugees who were, however, all Moslems. It is this collective memory of survival in the face of a threat of annihilation that is the *first strong dimension of identity* that leads to the extraordinary longevity of Atatürk’s memory. It also explains the strange co-existence in the Republican tradition, between assertive secularism and, yet, a “de facto” state religion. Note that this is in the end not that different from what was the situation in the United States for a long time : a definitely multi-ethnic nation, although it took a long time for African-Americans to become full citizens, but also a nation both secular and with a “Christian” identity, despite the many non-Christians who lived in it. Even today in some circles there remains the perception of a link between being an American and a having a Christian faith.

The second dimension of this feeling of identity linked to Atatürk is rooted in the impressive *modernization* that he led from above and that was, despite its critics, amazingly successful. Anatolia had been one of the poorest and least developed

parts of the late Ottoman Empire. Places like Egypt, Syria, Bosnia or Macedonia, were much richer than the Anatolian heartland. The economic measures and reforms of the 1920s and 1930s, including the mixed economy, public *and* private sector economic strategy followed, allowed Turkey to emerge into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an increasingly dynamic country, still with low incomes, but doing much better than most other parts of the ex-Ottoman Empire. Even before the Second World War, Turkey became a respected, modern and independent nation, no longer the “sick man of Europe”, able to give its educated elites at least, a feeling of “equality” with the citizens of the most advanced parts of the world. Turkey was not a colony. Turkey was not dominated by others. Turkey was respected and controlled its own destiny. Turkey participated in a “world civilization” which had succeeded in producing scientific, technological and economic progress, but it was not dominated by the countries who had been leading technological progress. That gave our parents and ourselves, a pride that carries Atatürk’s memory through the generations.

Of course these two dimensions were strongly linked in the minds of the “tired warriors” who found the strength to rise again and create the Republic. Professor Şükrü Hanioglu, in his book on Atatürk, tells us that after attending a western opera in Sofia as a young military attaché, an impressed Mustafa Kemal is said to have remarked that he now understood how the Bulgarians had defeated the Ottomans the previous year. Turkey had to modernize, western style, so it would never be defeated again!

I think it is these two dimensions, the memory of sheer survival, and the feeling of participating as an equal in global progress, that explains why the young woman in New York wanted Atatürk on her office’s wall, before anything else. Nobody was forcing her, nobody was telling her to do it, she *wanted* to do it because it was part of the perception she has of her identity.

Before turning to today and the future, let me touch on another important point. There is little doubt that the early Republican period was accompanied by sometimes bloody repression of rebellion and dissent, in very authoritarian ways, and by what quickly became a one party state led by a single man. One should

not forget, however, that these were terrible times in Europe, with Stalin in Russia, Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy and the fascists taking over in Spain. Taha Akyol, in his impressively researched latest book entitled “Atatürk’s Revolutionary Justice”, documents how arbitrary and politically motivated the judiciary operated in the 1920 and 1930s. But as Taha Akyol writes, there is no comparison between the extent of the totalitarian violence of other revolutions, starting with the French revolution, and the authoritarianism of Atatürk’s Turkey. This is not to excuse or belittle the violence and arbitrariness there was, but it is to remember that, while very radical, the Turkish revolution was not very violent by comparison to others. Moreover, Atatürk never looked to communist Russia or fascist Germany or Italy as long-term potential allies, but he looked to France and Great Britain instead, despite the rise of fascist ideology in the Europe of the 1930s, and despite the fact that the western democracies had been adversaries in World War I and had tried to essentially obliterate Turkey from the map of the world, with only US President Woodrow Wilson at the time trying to argue for less harsh a settlement.

Atatürk and his companions saw the one party state as a *tool* for the revolutionary period, not an end in itself. The long term objective, already at that time, was for Turkey to become a democracy like France, Britain or the United States. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the minute the Second World War ended, Atatürk’s closest friend and companion who had succeeded him in 1938, İsmet İnönü, moved Turkey to multi-party democracy, instead of trying to hang on to power, as Franco in Spain, or Salazar in Portugal did for many decades. Atatürk’s Republican Peoples Party led by İnönü, lost the 1950 election. Power, peacefully and democratically, passed to the opposition. İnönü had been Atatürk’s closest associate for two decades. Does this not show that Atatürk’s revolution was not totalitarian in its long-term goals, and that the founders of the Republic perceived the link between modernity, to which they were aspiring, and democracy? Later on, there were several military coups trying to legitimize themselves with reference to Kemalism, and the understanding of what it means to practice democracy remained weak and patchy in Turkey. But even the military, contrary to what we saw for decades in Latin America, Asia, and the

Middle East, never tried to establish a full military dictatorship, although they wanted and managed to keep a lot of influence. A civilian government was restored each time in less than 3 years. Some officers had wanted to stay in power; they were quickly marginalized. Deeply influenced by the underlying ideology of the Republic, the military *as an institution* believed that modernity was linked to democracy, as it was practiced by all the truly advanced countries after the defeat of fascism. They would never try to put Turkey into the group of third world dictatorships away from “contemporary civilization” of which a Kemalist Turkey had to be a part. They viewed themselves as guardians of secularism and territorial integrity, they were suspicious of decisions civilian politicians might take and were able to constrain civilian power, and they made devastating and hurtful mistakes, but, as an institution, they did not betray Atatürk by aiming to establish a lasting military regime.

Let me now go fast forward and look at where Turkey is today, and how it is heading to 2023, on a journey that started almost a century ago.

Let me begin by *the economy*. Economic success is crucial on the road to 2023. For many decades Turkey has been one of the more dynamic economies of the world, starting from a very low income base. The average GDP growth rate from 1946 to 2002 was about 5 percent, on the middle to high end of international experience. But while there were years of very rapid growth, there were also years of crisis and negative growth, such as for example in 1980, in 1994, in 1999, in 2001 and then again in 2009. These bad years lowered the average performance. Without them Turkey would have been one of the fastest growing economies in the world. In the last decade, (2003-2012), average growth was again about 5 percent ( 3.7 percent per capita: with population growth much lower now, a 5 percent growth rate is a better per capita achievement than it was 20 or 30 years ago). If we take out 2008 and 2009, the years of the world crisis associated with the US sub-prime mortgage disaster, GDP growth in Turkey would have averaged a spectacular 7 percent. But the high current account deficit reflecting too low a private domestic savings rate, still makes the Turkish economy vulnerable to outside shocks. Turkey has been able to reduce very substantially the public debt-to-GDP ratio thanks to the reforms of 2001-2002 and

the strict fiscal policy also pursued by the Justice and Development Party governments. Turkey's public debt now stands at about 38 percent of GDP. Compare that to the more than 80 percent public debt ratios in the United States and in most European countries, with some, such as Italy, reaching 120 percent. The Turkish household and private sector, however, have very low savings rates by international standards. The economy has therefore been very dependent on foreign capital inflows. When these inflows take the form of long-term investments in productive capacity, there is not much of a problem. But about two thirds of the inflows are much more speculative and short term, leading to an uncomfortable degree of potential volatility. To become one of the 10 largest economies in the world by 2023, Turkey needs to grow at an average of about 7 percent a year, with this growth complemented by some further appreciation of the Turkish Lira, reflecting not speculative capital inflows, but superior long term productivity performance. Moreover growth alone cannot be the sole objective. Equitable distribution of the fruits of growth should be more explicitly a part of the 2023 vision.

For the 2023 objective to be met, or for Turkey to come very close to it, there are several key conditions that must be fulfilled. The investment rate has to average not less than 23-24 percent, with domestic savings at about 18-19 percent, so that the current account deficit can stay below the 5 percent mark, which I consider the prudent upper limit for rapidly growing emerging market economies in general. This implies a 5 to 6 percentage point increase in Turkey's savings rate, compared to its current level, a feasible, but difficult to attain objective. There is no magic recipe for increasing a country's savings rate. A stable macro-economy, a strong and well regulated financial sector, a good return on investment, including a system of taxation that rewards long term savings and investment, are all desirable features. Other important conditions, for good resource allocation and a high investment rate, are clear rules of the game so that the economy can function without arbitrary and partisan political interventions. Establishing Independent and professional regulatory institutions, including an independent and strong Central Bank, ensuring transparent and competitive public procurement, and insisting on an arms- length distance between day to day



politics and the workings of the marketplace, were key reforms we undertook in 2001 and 2002. This is not at all to say that regulatory institutions should function without reference to and supervision by the democratic process. But the democratic process and the governments of the day have to show the maturity of encouraging real competition in the economy, chose the regulators for their competence and independent judgment, and allow the best entrepreneurs and firms to invest and to succeed, whatever their political views. Progressive taxation and an increasingly strong social solidarity system can then aim at an equitable distribution of the gains from growth.

Beyond these factors having to do with economic management as such, the overall *confidence* citizens have in the future is of course also a key factor for economic success.

This brings me to the second precondition for reaching the goals set for 2023. There has to be true *internal peace* and social cohesion. The fact that a party with strong references to religion is now in government for a decade, and is making plans for the hundredth anniversary in 2023, shows how Turkish democracy has evolved and developed since the early years. A whole conservative and religious current in society, that had been legally and politically constrained until the early part of our 21<sup>st</sup> century, has been able to organize itself politically, broaden its base by reaching out to the moderate center-right, and get elected with increasing majorities. Until a very few years ago, the army still constituted a politically influential counterweight to this powerful current. That is no longer the case. For the first time since the Republic's creation, civilian power is fully established and essentially unconstrained. In that sense Turkey is no longer different from the United States or the United Kingdom, to give just two examples. Successful democracy, however, is not just a "winner take all" system, where those who win elections, can do as they please. It has to include a system of checks and balances in a way that protects individual citizens, opposition groups, and whoever is in the minority. On the road to the hundredth anniversary of the Republic, Turkey now has the chance to show its citizens and the world that it has achieved what the founding fathers ultimately wanted, even though they did not practice it, namely that the country has become a full,

normally functioning democracy. We have a chance to become just that, but we are unfortunately not there yet. It is not just that there is need for a new constitution and new laws offering much stronger protection to dissent and individual rights, it is also a question of behavior and socio-political norms.

Two more underlying structural challenges still stand in the way of a fully developed democracy. First, Turkey has to not only *remain*, but also to *redefine* secularism. I referred at the beginning of my lecture to the reason why, despite Atatürk's secularism, Islam, and in fact Sunni Islam, was treated as a "de facto" if not "de jure" state religion. That was probably unavoidable given the circumstances at the time the Republic was founded. Survival required cohesion in a society where the State was closely identified with religious authority for centuries. Times have fortunately changed and Turkey's survival is no longer at stake. Turkey, now, can re-define secularism, as a much more total separation of religion and state. Individuals are and can be religious as they please, the State should not be. It should also not interfere with, or try to constrain the forms in which religion is practiced, or not, as long as they are peaceful. If the governing party and the main opposition, which is the party founded by Mustafa Kemal, can truly agree on this kind of secularism, Turkey will have solved a huge social problem that was lingering under the surface throughout the last decades.

The second, equally important challenge, is related to the Kurdish issue. The Republic was founded as a multi-ethnic nation-state, like the United States. But it was at a time when nationalism was reaching its peak in Europe. The founders of the Republic understandably thought they had to, and they largely succeeded in, creating a cohesive Turkish nation from its various diverse parts. The Bosnians, Tatars, Circassians, Albanians, Laz and other groups merged with the Turks of Anatolia into a new "Turkishness", quite easily. Since writing these lines I discovered that Strobe Talbott, then Deputy Secretary of State, now President of the Brookings Institution, had made the same point 14 years ago, in his Turgut Özal Memorial lecture. The Republic had saved all these groups, and each was relatively small, although not at all insignificant in number. While there are probably close to 4 million citizens of Bosnian origin in Turkey today, they do not feel the need for Bosnian being taught in schools, or being taught in Bosnian. The

situation is different for Turkey's Kurdish citizens. From the beginning they were large in numbers and they grew even larger. The majority of them, lived in a less accessible part of the country, and those regions remained the poorest and were neglected by the central administration. There is today a Kurdish identity that has developed besides the Turkish identity, and there is not much point in debating why *this* happened, while something analogous did *not* happen for any of the other groups. It is there, it is growing and it must be accepted. There are, however, no clear-cut geographical boundaries between Kurds and other citizens in Turkey. Citizens of Kurdish origin live side by side with citizens of different ancestries. Migration and a dynamic economy have created a society where Turkey's Kurds live and work all over Turkey, many of them participating in the rapid economic growth of the country. In the cities there is widespread marriage across all groups. There is therefore *only one solution*. Turkey's Kurds must not engage in violence and must seek their goals within Turkey's democracy, while Turkey must become a country where Kurds can fully live their culture and identity as they perceive it and want to live it, as citizens of Turkey. As long as they respect democratic procedures and do not engage in violence, it is up to them to decide how they want to live their identity, not up to others. I am truly optimistic that this can happen over the next ten years. Despite a sad and unacceptable degree of recent violence and terror, there is actually a feeling of belonging together, dating all the way back to the great Saladin, and rooted in centuries of living together. The Kurds played a critical role in Turkey's war of independence. All citizens have a stake in the economy, and all know that violence is the biggest obstacle to investment and development. National cohesion will increase, not decrease, if full cultural rights and strengthened local government allow our Kurdish citizens to thrive, prosper and be free to speak and learn their language in a self-confident, democratic, and undivided Turkey, where public discourse relates national belonging to *citizenship* and not to ethnicity. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government has made genuine efforts in that direction over the past several years. I think much more is needed, but a positive mature response is also needed from the Kurdish side. President Abdullah Gül, in two very important recent speeches, on the occasion of the opening of Parliament and on the occasion of Republic Day on October 29<sup>th</sup>,

forcefully stressed the need for a new constitution that much more effectively than today, protects freedom of speech and freedom of opinion, an area where very unfortunately, on some metrics at least, Turkey has moved backwards in the last two years. Three weeks ago, the new leader of Atatürk's party, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, visited the Kurdish mayor of Diyarbakır, Osman Baydemir, a strong and controversial proponent of Kurdish interests and issues, on the occasion of the religious holiday, the Kurban Bayram. I believe that this was an appropriate and courageous signal that those who cherish the memory of Mustafa Kemal as perhaps the most successful modernizer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, realize that modernization and progress is a *dynamic process* that changes form and priorities, as history advances. I do believe that Mustafa Kemal, the visionary and at the same time very pragmatic leader, would have visited the mayor of Diyarbakır, just as today's CHP's leader did, if he had lived in 2012. By this effort for internal peace, as well as many other efforts to modernize and strengthen the main opposition party, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is contributing to democracy, which has to be a system where a credible opposition has to be an alternative to whoever has won the last elections.

Finally let me conclude with a few words on a third element the successful journey to 2023 must encompass, that has to do with Turkey's place in the world, foreign policy and Turkish-American relations. Again these are not my areas of professional specialization, but it is not possible to separate economic, democratic and foreign policy success. A joyful celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic will have to be built on success in all three areas. The economic goal of becoming, or getting close to becoming, one of the 10 largest economies in the world, needs "peace at home and peace in the world", as Atatürk had stressed. It is interesting, for example, that in the memoirs of Ali Fuat Cebesoy, one of Atatürk's close early companions, as quoted by Taha Akyol, Mustafa Kemal, defending peace negotiator İsmet İnönü, who had asked for "accelerating the pace of the negotiations", tells Ali Fuat Paşa, that he also regrets that the new Turkey could not achieve all its territorial claims at the Lausanne peace negotiations after the war of independence, but that peace required

compromise and that “ the important things we have to do at home ...could not be achieved without peace”. Atatürk could not have succeeded at home if he had not been at crucial times a pragmatist and realist, and very much committed to peace. Revenge for past wars, territorial expansion, ill feelings towards other nations because of past events, were far from his forward looking mind. Despite the Greek invasion of Anatolia after the Great War, and the thousands of lives lost, Turkey signed a peace and friendship treaty with Greece quickly after the Republic was established. Indeed, the friendship with Greece progressed so much, that the great Greek statesman Venizelos, formally nominated Ataturk for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934!

As time is short I just want to make three points on these issues, which are crucial, however. They reflect in many ways, views you can also find in President Abdullah Gül’s two impressive speeches referred to already above, although I cannot of course pretend to speak for him. I recommend to all who are interested in Turkish affairs to read these two Presidential speeches and see and judge by yourselves.

The first and most important point relates to Turkish “soft power”, particularly in the Middle East and the Moslem world. It is already very effective, but it could grow even more, by an order of magnitude. Our historical, cultural and emotional links with the Arab countries in particular, are deep and strong. I had the privilege of being World Bank Vice-President for the Middle East and North Africa in the late 1990s. Nobody from Turkey can feel a stranger in these lands, marked by common architecture, familiar sounds of music, similar food and the celebration of common religious holidays. The same holds of course for Arab visitors to Turkey. Atatürk left a legacy of good neighborly relations, but also a strict legacy of peace and *non-interference in other countries internal political affairs*. Turkey’s influence in the region, greatly strengthened over the past ten years, should remain based on the power of our successful economic, cultural and democratic example, not on attempts to direct others in any way or to interfere beyond our borders. The Arab countries future is and should be in their hands. Neither Turkey nor the United States can shape that future. Particularly in the Middle East, which has suffered from colonial and imperial power coming from outside the region in

the past, foreign interference will always end up being resented, even if it comes with the best of intentions. No people or country in the long run likes interference coming from outside, even if, in the short term, various factions may appeal for it to further their cause. This is not to say that any of us can remain unaffected by people dying and suffering. Help in the form of attempts at impartial mediation as well as humanitarian aid, may often be necessary and highly desirable. Turkey can and is already playing an important humanitarian role, as far as Somalia. There is also the responsibility to protect all human beings under severe threat, within the framework of the United Nations. But Turkey should not appear to want to become a kind of neo-imperial power in the Middle East. This would badly misfire and undermine the real and positive soft power Turkey can deploy in the service of peace, economic development, human rights and democracy. It is on this that the United States and Turkey can work together. If Turkey can provide a shining example of economic success and internal peace and freedom, this will have a much greater impact on the region, than any foreign policy that borders on direct interventionism.

The second dimension here relates to Europe. The whole European project and its institutional architecture is going through a severe crisis these days, triggered initially by the Greek crisis, and then by the more general problems of the Euro-zone. Europe remains, however, taken as a whole, an economy roughly as large as the United States, with the euro-zone actually running a significant current account surplus, and an area of impressive social achievements, peace and cooperation. I do believe the current problems will eventually be overcome, but that there will be a Europe with concentric circles of cooperation. There is likely to be a politically much more integrated core with the euro as common currency, pursuing coordinated fiscal policies and a banking union complementing the monetary union. There will also be other countries, most notably the United Kingdom, countries that will *not* be part of the more tightly integrated Monetary Union, but that will be part of the European Union and of the single economic market. The European Union and the United Kingdom continue to need each other and I believe it is likely and desirable that the United Kingdom stay in the Union. There could also be much more advanced cooperation among the

members of this larger European Union on matters of defense, foreign policy, science, the environment and education. Turkey can and should join this re-structured European Union and be a member more like the United Kingdom or perhaps also Sweden, outside the Monetary Union, but a full member otherwise, with elected euro-parliamentarians, a Turkish member of the Commission and participation in the European Council, the same way the United Kingdom is likely to participate in the future. This is what we should aim for. Such a redefinition of the objective could infuse both new *dynamism* and new *credibility* into the vital project of making Turkey a member of the European Union – a European Union that in any case, has to re-invent itself. In no way will this diminish Turkey's influence in the Middle East. On the contrary, a recent poll found that more than 60 percent of Arab citizens want Turkey to be a member of the EU. Being part of Europe can only increase Turkey's soft power in the world. On Turkey's Republic Day, the President again forcefully re-affirmed what can rightly be seen as a continuity coming from Atatürk's vision, and linked this objective to the challenges facing Turkey today. By 2023, I do believe Turkey can and should have become a full member of the new European Union, a Union that the whole world much needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Finally, let me share my perspective on the relations between Turkey and the United States, a topic on which many have spoken with great eloquence, including President Clinton when he visited Turkey, as well as president Obama soon after he was elected in 2008. Don't worry, I am not going to start a whole new lecture at this late hour. I do want to stress, however that the United States and Turkey share many characteristics, more than perhaps most people realize. There are now also several hundred thousand Turkish origin residents or citizens in the United States, feeling happy, productive and welcome. Of course the comparison must keep in mind that the United States is a much larger country, much richer, with an economic, political and military power equal to none other in the world. Turkey is a medium size, emerging economic power. So the comparison must keep that in mind.

The United States and Turkey are both countries and societies with a strong global dimension. The United States in its very social fabric, is linked to all parts of

the world, with strong ties of course to Europe, but also to South and Central America, to Asia, with sizeable and growing Hispanic and Asian-American components of the American population, to Africa, with African Americans very much part of America's past, present and future, to the Middle East, with strong ties to Israel, but also to the Arab world. Despite ever present isolationist feelings and the two large oceans that separate the US geographically from most of the world, economics, demography and technology mean that America will become ever more global, while all Americans, even when more and more of them will speak Spanish as their mother tongue, will retain a strong sense of American identity. The same can be said for Turkey, in a somewhat more regional sense. It has been, for centuries, part of Europe, particularly of the Balkans, what we still call Rumeli. It is a largely Moslem country with deep cultural and religious ties to the Arab world. It is the successor of the Ottoman Empire, a state that gave refuge and warmly welcomed the Jewish community that had to leave Spain many centuries ago. It is a country with linguistic and now strong economic ties to Central Asia. It is a country that is reaching out to, and investing in Africa. And it has been a strong ally and friend of the United States, at least since the Korean War in the early 1950s, when the Turkish contingent in Korea was second in number only to the American one. As of 2012, Turkish Airlines flies to more countries in the world than any other airline. Travelling way too much in my life, I can highly recommend it.

The world faces new, tremendous, global challenges. From climate change, to restoring solid and sustainable economic growth, from world trade and finance, to safety from terrorism or nuclear proliferation or to the control of infectious disease, many of the most difficult problems require strong global cooperation. In this day and age, nothing can be achieved any more by sheer force or be imposed from outside on other societies. Young people everywhere, however, are looking across borders, for examples of what works, what can bring happiness, freedom and prosperity. I do believe that for both the United States and Turkey there is a huge opportunity to set such examples, and to support each other in setting them. If we, both, succeed internally, we will succeed internationally. If on the other hand, we cannot solve our own internal problems,



it is hard to see how we can help solve the problems of the world. Moreover, if Turkey and the United States strongly cooperate in the many venues and organizations that exist, in NATO, at the United Nations, at the G-20, the “soft power” of both countries can be leveraged in multiple ways for the benefit of citizens from both countries, and indeed for the benefit of the world as a whole.

The next decade will not be an easy one, for Turkey, for the United States or for the World. We will have to work hard, whether our activities are primarily economic, political, civil society oriented or academic. I do hope and trust however, that many of us, in 2023, will be able to celebrate, wherever we may be at the time, as citizens of, or friends of Turkey, a 21<sup>st</sup> century republic and democracy, that looks forward, while cherishing the best features of its past.

Thank you all for your patience and for giving me the privilege of sharing my perspectives with you this evening.